

The Honorable Brian A. Tsuchida

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE
WESTERN DISTRICT OF WASHINGTON
AT SEATTLE

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA,

Plaintiff,

v.

CODY CROFT,

Defendant.

NO. MJ22-418

COMPLAINT FOR VIOLATIONS:

18 U.S.C. § 2251(a), (e)

18 U.S.C. § 2252(a)(2), (b)(1)

BEFORE, the Honorable Brian A. Tsuchida, United States Magistrate Judge, U.S.
Courthouse, Seattle, Washington.

COUNT 1
(Production of Child Pornography)

Between in or about 2019 and in or about September 2022, in Snohomish County,
within the Western District of Washington, and elsewhere, CODY CROFT employed,
used, persuaded, induced, enticed, and coerced a minor to engage in sexually explicit
conduct for the purpose of producing a visual depiction of such conduct and transmitting
any live visual depiction of such conduct, knowing and having reason to know that such
visual depiction would be transported and transmitted using any means and facility of
interstate and foreign commerce, such visual depiction was transported and transmitted
using any means and facility of interstate and foreign commerce and in and affecting

1 interstate and foreign commerce, and such visual depiction was produced using materials
2 that had been mailed, shipped, and transported in interstate and foreign commerce.

3 All in violation of Title 18, United States Code, Section 2251(a), (e).

4 **COUNT 2**

5 **(Distribution of Child Pornography)**

6 On or about September 1, 2022, in Snohomish County, within the Western District of
7 Washington, and elsewhere, CODY CROFT knowingly distributed, and attempted to
8 distribute, any visual depiction—the production of which involved the use of a minor
9 engaging in sexually explicit conduct and such visual depiction was of such conduct—using
10 any means and facility of interstate and foreign commerce, such visual depiction had been
11 mailed and shipped and transported in and affecting interstate and foreign commerce, and
12 such visual depiction contained materials that have been mailed and so shipped and
13 transported, by any means, including by computer.

14 All in violation of Title 18, United States Code, Section 2252(a)(2) and
15 2252(b)(1).

16 I, Special Agent Sara K. Blond, being duly sworn under oath, depose and say:

17 **INTRODUCTION**

18 1. I am a Special Agent (“SA”) with the Federal Bureau of Investigation
19 (“FBI”) and have been so employed since 2009. I am a law enforcement officer of the
20 United States, within the meaning of Title 18, United States Code, who is empowered by
21 law to conduct investigations of, and to make arrests for offenses enumerated in Title 18,
22 United States Code.

23 2. I am assigned to the Everett and Bellingham Resident Agencies, where I
24 specialize in Violent Crimes Against Children and Human Trafficking investigations
25 occurring in Snohomish, Skagit, Whatcom, Island, and San Juan counties, which are
26 situated in the Western District of Washington. I am assigned to the Crimes Against
27 Children & Human Trafficking Task Force, which includes the online sexual exploitation
28 of children involving the transmission, possession and production of child pornography,

1 exploitation of children on the internet, and other federal criminal activity. During my
2 career as an FBI Special Agent, I have served as the case agent in numerous child
3 pornography investigations. I have participated in all aspects of child pornography
4 investigations, including conducting surveillance, undercover operations, identifying
5 victims, interviewing suspects, and executing arrest and search warrants. In 2015, I
6 underwent specialized training facilitated by the FBI. I successfully completed
7 coursework to become a Digital Evidence Extraction Technician, as authorized by the
8 FBI's Computer Analysis and Response Team. In this capacity, I have specialized
9 training in computer forensics, which involves the search, seizure, and extraction of
10 digital evidence; this requires on-going mandatory training on an annual or semi-annual
11 basis. I have worked as the case agent on numerous investigations involving child
12 pornography, serving as the affiant on search warrants, complaints, and arrest warrants.

13 3. The facts set forth in this Complaint are based on my own personal
14 knowledge; knowledge obtained from other individuals during my participation in this
15 investigation, including other law enforcement officers; review of documents and records
16 related to this investigation; communications with others who have personal knowledge
17 of the events and circumstances described herein; and information gained through my
18 training and experience. I have not set forth each and every fact known to me as a result
19 of this investigation but only those facts I believe necessary to establish probable cause to
20 conclude that CODY CROFT committed the offenses charged in this Complaint.

21 **SUMMARY OF THE INVESTIGATION**

22 4. This investigation involves a target who, acting via the online alias
23 "PamBeasley69," has produced and distributed child pornography via an online chat and
24 messaging platform¹ (hereinafter, "PLATFORM A"). I have identified this user of
25 PLATFORM A as CODY CROFT.

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28 ¹ The actual names of the online chat messaging application and the names of the specific chat groups is known to law enforcement. Investigation into the users of the site/chat groups remains ongoing and disclosure of the names of the site and the chat groups would potentially alert other targets of the investigation, potentially provoking them to notify other users of law enforcement action, flee, and/or destroy evidence.

5. This investigation began when an FBI Dallas Online Covert Employee (OCE) communicated with CROFT over PLATFORM A. During their conversations, as detailed below, CROFT purported to be abusing a young girl and sent an image that he claimed depicted him abusing this child. After FBI Dallas identified CROFT as the PLATFORM A user and tied him to a residence in Snohomish County, they referred the matter to me for further investigation.

6. On August 31, 2022, an individual using username PamBeasley69, display name Jim Halpert (later identified as CODY CROFT) joined a group on PLATFORM A administered by the FBI Dallas OCE. Upon joining the group, CROFT sent the following message to the group: “Hello all, active parent looking for other parent into playing with items or ruing items and putting them back for normal use. Need to verify. Active admin?”

7. Later the same day, OCE sent CROFT a message which read “Hey Jim. Ready for you to verify”. In response, CROFT sent “Ty! Not sure why but my messages are not coming through from new people”.

8. CROFT sent OCE an image of an adult male sitting next to a pre-pubescent female child, which I later reviewed. It is referenced here as **Photo 1** (filename: IMG_0203.jpg.) The child in Photo 1 appears to be approximately three or four years old. She is wearing a pink and white long-sleeved shirt with a very distinctive print. The print has pink unicorn cupcakes, blue stars, and pink and white donuts. She is seated next to an adult male wearing a tan or white collared shirt, who is smiling at the camera. To be clear, Photo 1 does not depict Child Sexual Abuse Material (CSAM).

9. After Photo 1, CROFT sent a live² image, which I later reviewed. It is referenced here as **Photo 2** (filename: IMG_0204.jpg). Photo 2 is a “selfie”-style photo of an adult male. The male is seated alone and wearing a blue v-neck shirt. The male in

² I know from my training and experience that a “live” photo is one that is taken by a PLATFORM A user by using the application’s feature that allows it access a device’s camera. A live photo is typically distinguished from a nonlive photo, which can be selected from the images stored on the phone and shared via PLATFORM A.

1 Photo 2 appears to be the same male in Photo 1. After Photo 2, CROFT sent OCE the
2 following message:

3 CROFT: Fixed the problem. Hoping it's a nice active room. Thanks

4 10. The next day, OCE messaged CROFT and exchanged the following
5 messages:

6 OCE: She's adorable bro! How old is she? Y'all active?

7 CROFT: We are. Non invasive

8 OCE: Mmmmm. Best kind. When y'all start

9 CROFT: A year to two ago? Not sure. It all muddys together.

10 OCE: [laughing emoji] All good

11 CROFT: How's the group? A good amount of people that like to show and
12 be adored?

13 OCE: Hard to meet other legit dads tbh. Well tbh kinda slow. I took over
14 awhile ago then got booted from [PLATFORM A] and group kinda went
15 down hill. Now that I'm back trying to clean it up and weed out al the fake
16 ass hole pic hunters.

17 CROFT: Makes sense. Takes time to make a proper room. I gave up a
18 while ago and am just getting back on [PLATFORM A]

19 OCE: Noice. Welcome to group

20 CROFT: Thanks.

21 OCE: Looking forward to getting to know you and yours [wink emoji].

22 How old is she btw? Mines [Name Redacted] and we are from [State

23 Redacted]. Again she's cute AF bro! Damn.

24 11. CROFT sent OCE another image, which I later reviewed. It is referenced
25 here as **Photo 3** (filename: IMG_0205.jpg). Photo 3 depicts an adult hand touching a
26 child's clothing. The child is wearing a pink top or possibly a pink skirt, and pink
27 underwear. The hand is touching the pink top. The camera is positioned upwards,
28 causing it to focus on the crotch area of the child's underwear. Based on the size of the

1 child's legs relative to her body size, I would estimate the child is between two and five
2 years old. This photo does not depict CSAM.

3 12. After sending Photo 3, CROFT sent a message to OCE:

4 CROFT: Can you please share. This is one of her friends that came by. Got
5 an upskirt

6 13. CROFT sent another image, which I later reviewed. It is referenced here as
7 **Photo 4** (filename: IMG_0206.jpg). Photo 4 depicts an adult male's hand with the
8 fingers spread out. The hand is positioned over an open suitcase. There is a pair of little
9 girl's underwear situated on top of the suitcase. The underwear is white with pink
10 stripes. It has a blue and silver striped elastic waist band. The front of the underwear has
11 a yellow yawning emoji positioned above the word "Thursday". The male's hand has
12 distinguishing marks, possibly scars, near the base of the index finger and near the
13 webbing of the thumb.

14 14. CROFT told the OCE that he was kicked out of another group on Platform
15 A because of a disagreement with the group administrator. CROFT initially believed
16 OCE was that group's administrator. OCE responded by clarifying he was not the group
17 administrator that kicked out CROFT. The conversation was as follows:

18 CROFT: Was sharing with [user name redacted (another group admin)] and
19 he may have a dau [daughter] but he is hunting so I might just take my lil
20 one and go. I have sooo much and your ass kicked me because I wouldn't
21 show him my girls bare pussy before he showed my (sic) his girls covered
22 bits. Sounds like hunting to me and he got mad when I said I only look for
23 parents into sharing not hunting pics.

24 OCE: No dude I didn't kick you. If I did was an accident.

25 CROFT: He did. Because I wouldn't send him a bare pussy shot of my lil
26 one.
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OCE: This is [user name redacted] we're talking about? He s stood [sic] dude. We've actually shared a lot with each other. He's a good dude I mean. Sorry man.

CROFT: After sending him upskirt of my neighbor girl, the ones I sent you, and a nude of my niece

15. CROFT sent OCE a screenshot of his conversation with the other administrator who kicked him out of the other chatroom, which I later reviewed. It is referenced here as **Photo 4** (filename: IMG_0207.jpg). Photo 4 is a screenshot of a chat conversation. It includes an image of a nude pubescent female, which was sent from one person to another within the chat. In the conversation viewable within the screenshot, CROFT said the image depicted a fourteen year-old. The image depicts the nude torso of a pubescent female. She is standing upright, at an angle from the camera. Her bare breasts, bare stomach, and pubic hair are viewable from the camera.

16. CROFT continued to message OCE. CROFT expressed anger towards the other administrator who kicked CROFT from the other chatroom. Regarding the administrator, CROFT said he was "happy to show him her little pussy", in reference to CROFT's daughter.

17. Messaging continued between CROFT and OCE with the following messages:

CROFT: Can you add me back and admin me so he can't boot? I'll help if you need it. And in good faith to prove I'm not a fucking jok

OCE: We need good [wink emoji] dads and daus. We be lacking lately

18. After that, CROFT sent OCE a file depicting CSAM, which I later reviewed. It is referenced here as Photo 5 (filename: IMG_0208.jpg). The following is a description of Photo 5:

Photo 5 (filename: IMG_0208.jpg)

This image depicts the vagina of a prepubescent girl. The girl is seated on a toilet seat cover with a Minnie Mouse pattern with the word "Smile." The

girl is seated on the toilet with her legs open. She is not wearing pants or underwear. An adult's left hand is touching the girl's exposed vagina, and stretching her labia open, making it the focal point of the image. The girl is wearing a pink and white long-sleeved shirt with an identical print as the child in Photo 1 (p8). The adult hand has a distinctive mark, possibly scarring, between the second and third knuckle of the middle finger. Based on the lack of pubic hair, small body size of the child, lack of hip development, and size of the vagina relative to the hand, I estimate this child is approximately three or four years old.

19. CROFT sent another live image of an adult's left hand with the fingers spread, which I later reviewed. It is referenced here as **Photo 6** (filename: IMG_0209.jpg). The hand is positioned over red, white, and black plaid fabric, possibly a placemat or blanket. There is some skin marking on the middle finger between the second and third knuckle. CROFT told OCE that the hand in Photo 6 was the same hand as Photo 5, pointing to a burn mark he incurred:

OCE: Mmm that miss cutie? Likeyyyy!!!!

CROFT: Yes. Please keep form group and I can share when I'm admin. Is that proof enough? Same hand. The burn is a scar now but it's the same.

OCE: Burn?

CROFT: On the middle finger from an oven rack.

20. The conversation continued between CROFT and OCE. OCE told CROFT he would check with the other users and administrators affiliated with the other chatroom with the goal of getting CROFT added back to the room. In addition, CROFT said he worked at a hotel and that he was "switching to night shifts at the hotel I work in (good for admining) and will be working til 7 am so we are switching up the schedule here".

21. On September 1, 2022 OCE took a video screen recording of the chats exchanged between CROFT and OCE. In addition, OCE took screenshots of when OCE joined the room and his comments made in the room. I have not yet reviewed the

1 screenshots. OCE conducted an extraction from OCE's cell phone of the PLATFORM A
2 chats between CROFT and OCE. I reviewed the extraction, which shows the chat
3 conversation between CROFT and OCE, as well as the images sent to the OCE which
4 have been previously described in this affidavit.

5 22. FBI Dallas submitted an exigent request to PLATFORM A for the
6 subscriber data and IP logs associated with CROFT. I reviewed the returns from
7 PLATFORM A and noted that CROFT's account is registered to email address
8 "justcodycroft1@gmail.com."

9 23. On September 2, 2022, I obtained search warrants for CROFT's person,
10 home, and car. That same day, the Lynnwood Police Department (LPD) arrested CROFT
11 on an outstanding state warrant. I met CROFT at the Lynnwood Police Department.
12 After being advised of his constitutional rights, CROFT invoked his right to counsel.

13 24. Upon meeting CROFT, it was obvious to me that he is the same adult male
14 depicted in the photos described above and sent via PLATFORM A.

15 25. While searching CROFT's apartment, FBI agents interviewed CROFT's
16 partner, Jennifer Higgens, who lives there with CROFT. Ms. Higgens confirmed that
17 CROFT uses PLATFORM A. Ms. Higgens identified the young girl in Photo 1 as a
18 relative of CROFT's who lives in another state. Ms. Higgens confirmed that she and
19 CROFT recently visited these family members and confirmed that he had recently burned
20 his left arm. She knew CROFT formerly used the email address
21 justcodycroft1@gmail.com or possibly justcodycroft1@yahoo.com. Finally, Ms.
22 Higgens stated that CROFT recently befriended another young girl who lives in their
23 apartment complex who likes to play with their pet dog.

24 26. During the search of CROFT's apartment, FBI agents located several
25 articles of children's clothing. CROFT's partner said there was no reason for there to be
26 children's clothing anywhere in the home, as they do not have children. CROFT's
27 partner said one or two articles of baby clothes might be hers from when she was a baby,
28 as well as some doll clothing specifically designed for teddy bears. I looked at the

1 children's clothing seized from the search, and noticed many articles appeared newer
2 than what Ms. Higgins described might be her childhood keepsakes.

3 27. During the search of CROFT's apartment, FBI agents located a red, white,
4 and black plaid bedsheet. I reviewed a photo of this bedsheet, and it appears to be the
5 same fabric seen in Photo 6.

6 28. After attempting to interview CROFT, I stayed at the Lynnwood Police
7 Department to discuss logistics. During this conversation, LPD Sergeant (Sgt.). Chris
8 Breault told me that CROFT removed his shirt and attempted to hang himself inside of
9 LPD's holding cell. Sgt. Breault also told me LPD found children's underwear inside the
10 backpack CROFT was wearing when they arrested him.

11 29. Accompanied by another agent, I arrested CROFT and transported him to
12 the Federal Detention Center (FDC) in Seatac. Pursuant to FBI protocol, CROFT was
13 secured in the rear passenger seat; I was seated in the rear driver's seat, behind the agent
14 who was driving. CROFT's hands were handcuffed in the front and secured to a belly
15 band, which gave me a clear view of CROFT's left hand. From my vantage point, I
16 observed several distinguishing marks on CROFT's left hand, similar to those in Photo 5
17 and Photo 6.

18 30. While transporting CROFT from Lynnwood to Seatac, a large column of
19 black smoke was emanating from a nearby neighborhood, which was visible from the
20 highway. Without any prompting, CROFT said it was sad to know that he was having a
21 worse day than the person whose house was on fire. CROFT began crying. CROFT
22 asked who his "roomie" would be at the "Federal pen" and asked what other types of
23 offenders would be at that facility. Amidst tears, CROFT explained he attempted suicide
24 a couple of weeks ago. FDC Seatac personnel placed CROFT on suicide watch after he
25 was booked into their facility.

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CONCLUSION

32. Based on the above facts, I respectfully submit that there is probable cause to believe that CODY CROFT committed the offenses charged in Counts 1-2 above.



Sara K. Blond, Affiant
Special Agent, FBI

The above-named agent provided a sworn statement attesting to the truth of the foregoing Complaint and Affidavit submitted to me by reliable electronic means pursuant to Fed. R. Crim. Proc. 4.1(a), and the Court hereby finds that there is probable cause to believe the Defendant committed the offense set forth in the Complaint.

Dated this 3rd day of September, 2022.



BRIAN A. TSUCHIDA
United States Magistrate Judge